

THE AUTHOR:

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE TO INTEREST AND HELP ALL LITERARY WORKERS.

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A DIFFERENCE OF OPINION.

In the November number of *THE AUTHOR* are two articles which advocate such opposite views relating to the best training for authorship, that a young writer is likely to feel confused by reading them.

W. F. Henderson, in an article on "Journalism versus Literature," taken from *Lippincott's Magazine*, says that daily journalism is the poorest training in the world for a literary life, while Edward W. Bok recommends the American newspaper as the very best of schools for would-be authors.

Both of these men are good authority; so which opinion shall the young writer choose?

There is a sense in which both opinions are correct. To excel in pure literature requires two things, and necessarily two kinds of train-

ing. The first is, a knowledge of life. That this may be gained the author must have a wide experience in the world, and a habit of keen observation. He must see crime, poverty, and misery. He must view home life among rich and poor, in city and country. He must observe people under many and varied conditions, and note their actions, feelings, and motives under widely differing circumstances. When he writes his imaginary stories he must stand like an imaginary reporter, telling simply what his characters do, expressing neither praise nor blame. Now, where can one get a more varied experience, and come more closely in contact with all phases of real life, than as a reporter or an editor on a daily newspaper?

But let not the would-be author think that he can fall in with the prevailing style of newspaper reports and yet succeed. Purity and grace of expression, combined with that indefinable something we call culture, is the other necessity to true literature, and that can only be gained in the secluded room and the quiet, literary atmosphere. The only true school of training for authorship would have to combine these two opposing conditions, and perhaps the difficulties in the way of such a combination form the very reason why such a school has never been established.

Most of our successful authors have had these two kinds of training at different times in their lives. Others combine the two at different times of the year. I know of an author who spends several weeks of each year knocking about the city in a slouch hat and old clothes, riding for hours upon street-cars and ferry-boats, studying life. Then he puts on his good clothes, retires to his study, and writes his stories, based on the things he has seen.

It seems to me that for a young person the very best substitute for attendance at a school for authorship would be to spend three years at home, quietly reading the best English authors, and writing enough to keep in practice, then to spend three or four years in active journalism, either as a reporter or a local editor, afterward retiring again to one's sanctum or study to do one's best work. Six or seven years is not too long for a young man or woman, just out of school, to spend in preparation for real life work, and many are obliged to spend a longer time, whether they will or no.

Eva Kinney Griffith.

WHITEWATER, Wis.

IDEALISM AND REALISM.

I believe the realists, or rather some of the sillier of them, object to invention altogether, and must have everything a document, as they call it, and taken out of a note-book. This is a question of sentiment. I suspect most of our inventions are documentary enough, and taken out of the note-book of the memory. I will give you a couple of examples from my own case. Some five or six years after I had written "Treasure Island" I picked up Washington Irving's "Tales of a Traveller," and there I find Billy Bones, with his voice, his manners, his talk, his sabre-cut, his sea-chest, and all that is Billy Bales'. I had read it long ago, and, if you will allow me a bull, I had forgotten, but my memory had remembered. Again, I fondly supposed I had invented a scene when Alan Breck quarrels with one of the McGregors in a house in Balquidder. Here in Sydney, not two days ago, a gentleman informs me that I had read the outlines of that scene, even to the names of the three principal characters engaged, in Pitcairn's "Criminal Trials." I do not remember. I do not suppose there is a copy of Pitcairn in the colonies, so that I cannot make sure, but I have not the least doubt that it is so. We all, idealists and realists alike, rearrange that matter of observed life with which our memories are charged, and the most we can mean by the word invention is some happy congruity or surprise in the method of arranging it.

I am the last man in the world to fight against coincidences in a story. In life people are always meeting in strange ways, and somebody is always looking on, and strange things are done. But, as you will see if you look into any trial, and remark the crowd of witnesses that have to be produced,

the coincidences do not happen in succession to the same person. Well, we should make our stories very tedious if we were continually introducing fresh persons, and we prefer, very rightly, to run the coincidence a little hard. The same remark applies to change of scene. We justly try to focalize our interests as well as personality.

The realists will not let themselves enjoy anything. The moment anything enjoyable appears they must remind the reader that there is a cesspool under the kitchen floor, a corpse in the back parlor cupboard, and a volcano in the immediate vicinity. I do not say it is not so in real life. I only say that in life nobody cares. If he is meeting his sweetheart or combating his enemy at the moment, cesspool, corpse, and volcano are all blotted from his mind. He does not look out of the window to analyze a smell, and consider the miserable fate of humanity or the geological conditions of the earth. He does not care a farthing candle if the whole thing is going to explode to-morrow. At that moment he is all upon the present passion, and his being thrills. It is this synthetic thrill of emotion that I miss in the so-called realists.

Writers appear to have become infected with a desire to imitate painters. Laborious and minute description has become the disease of literature. We can make our hero speak, we can make him move, we can make him think, we can make him travel, we can make him grow old, we can let him die, and even hear what his survivors say of him. But one thing we cannot do: we cannot tell what he looked like. Observe the efforts of artists to realize characters, even the most elaborately described. Every draughtsman makes a new thing of them. Or take scenery. Have you ever seen Mr. Hamerton's excellent analysis of the excellent landscape in "The Lady of Shalot"? Well, the same objections are valid against any landscape in literature, however minutely reproduced. One sense literature can only serve by an occasional and half-miraculous *tour de force*, and that sense is the sense of sight.

I believe authors are blinded on the one hand by a technical preoccupation, by the supposed necessity of perpetual minute and always original observation; while they are blinded on the other by the habit of living in towns, in a mean, poky, hole-and-corner civilization, where they live in clubs and restaurants, never seeing people in the open air, in their working clothes, and undergoing healthy toils and dangers. Pierre Loti and De Maupassant are the two that are by far the most sympathetic

to me in their methods, and the only two of whom I absolutely know that they have had some good experience of the open air and of a healthy life.

I am like a Highland skipper of whom I once asked the meaning of a Gaelic name, and who replied, seemingly in physical agony, "A canna say it, but a feel it in ma breest." Any way that I can put it in words would sound something far harsher than I mean. I will deal perfectly frankly with you. I do not know what idealism means, and I do not know what realism means. I try to represent what seems to me conspicuous and representable in the world in which I live. I try to do so, so as, on the whole, to give pleasure or to awaken interest. I see the defects, I see the inherent untruths, I see what seems to me the wanton unpleasantness of the methods of the other school. I suppose they see all these things in mine. I suppose if you were interviewing a realist he would point them out to you with truth. I suppose even that he would go on as I have done to connect them with what he would consider some technical error of our method, for I believe the question to be wholly technical, and it is because I think my view of the resources and defects of literature as an art to be the more correct that I hold the literature of the so-called idealists to be the more moral.

—Robert Louis Stevenson, in *Melbourne Argus*.

MAKING THE HOLIDAY BOOKS.

A holiday book is nothing if it is not illustrated; therefore the subject must be one capable of illustration; and the right artist must be found. The artist is usually paid a specified sum for the illustration of a book; the author and publisher go shares on a basis that is the result of agreement, the profit of each depending on the number of copies sold.

The size of the prospective book must now be decided upon, the character of the illustrations, whether they are to be "run in" with type or printed separately, the kind of type to be used, the paper, the binding, and, lastly, the "jacket," or outside paper cover. All this involves endless work and ceaseless oversight on the part of the publisher or his assistants, if they desire to produce a creditable piece of book-making. A title-page, for instance, it would seem is a simple thing—a matter of three or four lines only; and yet rarely is a title-page printed except as the result of half a dozen experiments. All this experimenting and preparatory work requires a plenty of time; and the holiday book is usually designed a year, and sometimes two years or more, before it makes its appearance on the bookseller's counter.

Books may be illustrated in four principal ways: by steel or copper plate engravings or etchings; by lithographs, either plain or in colors; by engravings on wood; by photographic "process" plates.

A steel-plate engraving is made by cutting or scratching lines upon a smooth surface of soft steel, which is hardened before printing. If this plate, with the incised lines upon it representing the object to be illustrated, were placed in an ordinary printing-press, it would print as a black ground, with the lines in white, and would resemble the advertising cuts which may be seen in any newspaper, white letters in a field of solid black; in fact, one of these white-letter advertisements shows very clearly the principle of the steel plate. If the ink on the black part of such a cut were rubbed off, and a sufficient quantity of ink rolled into the depressions, powerful pressure would cause the paper to sink into the cavities and absorb the ink, thus printing the letters in black without any border. This is precisely the way in which the steel plate is printed. After being thoroughly covered with ink, the surface of the plate is rubbed off with a cloth, then polished with the hand until perfectly clean; a sheet of heavy paper is laid upon it, and it is passed through a hand press, a roller applying heavy pressure to the yielding paper, which takes up the ink in the shallow incisions in the metal, and receives no mark whatever from the level parts of the plate. The work of engraving on steel or copper is necessarily very slow, especially when the work is done in "line," and that of printing slower still, compared with relief printing, and though a fine steel engraving is still regarded as the highest product of the engraver's art, it has fallen into disfavor as a method of illustrating books, and is now seldom used except for frontispiece portraits, and these are generally done in the inferior "stipple" or dots.

Etching has increased in popularity with the bookmakers as steel engraving has declined, and is not only less difficult for an artist to master than the latter, requiring far less technical skill, but admits of greater freedom of expression. In steel engraving, proper, the lines are cut into the metal with a sharp steel pick, called a graver or burin. In etching, the plate is first covered with a kind of varnish, and through this the artist scratches the design with a needle or "dry point"; the plate is then covered with acid, which eats into the metal where the varnish has been scraped away, thus giving the lines sufficient depth to hold the ink. The process of printing is the same as with steel-plate work.

Lithography is the middle process of picture-

making, coming between the intaglio steel plate and the relief woodcut. The lithograph is printed from a perfectly flat surface. This seemingly impossible operation is accomplished by taking advantage, in a devious way, of the fact that grease and water will not mix. The artist draws his picture, reversed of course, upon a smooth porous stone, using a thin greasy ink and a steel pen. Water will not affect this ink, but a greasy printing ink will stick to it. Hence, when the drawing is complete and the stone is ready for printing, it is first rubbed over carefully with a moist sponge. The water covers the face of the stone except where the grease-picture is. The greasy ink is now rolled over the entire stone, but the ink is repelled wherever the stone is wet, and taken on only where it is dry—*i. e.*, the lines of the picture; there grease meets grease, and they unite. The paper is now placed upon the stone, and both are passed through a press very similar to the copper-plate press, except that a scraper gives the lithograph the impression instead of a roller. There are also steam lithographic presses which print nearly as fast as type-printing machines. The peculiarity of the colored lithograph is that a large number of impressions is required to complete a single picture. In printing some of the fine chromos issued by Prang, of Boston, as many as forty-five impressions have been required, each in a different color. This means that a separate stone has been prepared for each impression.

Of late years zinc has been used successfully instead of stone in the making of lithographs, and, being cheaper and taking up much less room, it has almost entirely superseded the stone for many classes of work.

Wood engraving during the present generation has been developed to great perfection along the line of delicacy and minute detail. The great advantage of the wood engraving over the copper-plate and lithograph is that it can be printed in the same press and on the same sheet with type. This makes the cost of printing very much less. There is a gain also in time, for large blocks can be divided among several engravers, each finishing his portion, and the several parts being then fitted together.

Woodcuts are engraved on a hard and close-grained wood, generally boxwood, sawed into small sections about an inch thick. The pieces are fastened together, then planed, and become practically one block. From the surface of this wood the engraver cuts away all the parts which he wishes to appear as white, leaving in relief the lines

which are to be printed. Formerly it was the practice for the artist to draw his picture, reversed, directly upon the wood itself, which then went into the hands of the engraver, who necessarily destroyed the artist's work as his own progressed. It is now the general custom, however, to take a photograph of the artist's design, and transfer this to the wood. This leaves only an outline in light and shade on the wood, and it is the engraver's business to change the surface into lines and dots of such character as shall properly "interpret" the artist's work. With magnifying-glass over the wood, patiently, day after day, sometimes for months at a time, the engraver grooves and gouges the block with sharp steel picks, until at last it is put upon the proof-press, and a "plate proof" taken, after which the finishing touches are given, and the "artist's proof" comes out, a thing of beauty and a delight to the heart of the proud worker. But the wood itself is rarely printed from direct, save in this first instance. The delicate lines would soon be beaten down and destroyed by the pressure of the power press, and a fac-simile must be made in copper before the woodcut is ready for book-printing.

Photography is now the great rival of the older processes of illustration, and has of late years been proving a very serious competitor indeed, especially to wood engraving. By applications of photography, an exact fac-simile printing plate, either in relief or intaglio, can now be made of almost any picture, drawing, or photograph. These processes are all more or less secret, but the secret is an open one in its main principles. It lies in the fact that a surface of gelatine can be chemically treated so that portions that are exposed to light become indestructible, while parts not so exposed can be dissolved. When, then, light is passed through a negative photograph on glass (in which the shadows are white and the lights are dark), on to a plate of prepared gelatine or other sensitized substance, the shadows or black lines, which the transmitted light imprints, will become insoluble, while the portions of the plate upon which the light has not fallen remain dissolvable. These soft parts can now be washed away in the gelatine, thus leaving the black lines in relief; a mould is taken from the plate, and an electrotpe made for printing; or, if gelatinized zinc has been employed, the plate is put into an acid bath, where the metal which is unprotected by the black lines is eaten away, thus giving a picture in relief, which can be used directly on the printing-press, and which will outlast even an electrotpe. The process as thus described will give a good result only when the

object or drawing copied is in black lines, or "pen and ink." Such work is reproduced more faithfully than any engraver can do it, and, by reduction in the photograph, can be made to appear very delicate.

The photogravure, which is the reverse of the relief plate, is made by exposing a metal plate, covered with a protective grained varnish, under a positive photograph on glass, when the parts of the plate that are to show as white become insoluble, and those that are to appear as black lines can be eaten down into the metal by the application of acid. This intaglio plate is then printed in a copper-plate press, and with good work a very handsome picture can be produced.

The "half-tone" process is the one which has received the most attention of late years, and many and ingenious are the devices used in overcoming the difficulties involved in translating "half-tone" into a printing surface. An ordinary photograph, or a "wash drawing," such as are sought to be reproduced, presents a flat surface in light and shade, varying from deep black to clear white. A picture in simple black and white, without shading, would print as a silhouette, not as a reproduction of a photograph. In order to obtain a printing surface, the graduated tints of the photograph must be changed into a graduated shading, or into lines or dots that are of varying thickness and nearness. The intermediate lights between black and white are called "half-tones." The earliest process of reproducing these "half-tones" was by wetting and then rapidly drying the gelatine plate, thus causing it to crack in very minute reticulations, which follow the lights and shades of the picture automatically, in a remarkable manner. Another, and a more successful plan, which is the one now in general use, is to use a very minute network, or "screen plate," made of thin glass ruled diagonally, between the object to be photographed and the negative plate, which latter will thus have imprinted upon it an image that is broken up into the tiny squares that are seen in a "process cut" when it is closely examined. In another process a plaster cast is taken of the "swelled" gelatine plate, and this cast is covered with a film of ink laid on by a finely reticulated inking apparatus, which applies the ink in lines nicely graduated to the values of the picture; the image in line so produced is transferred to zinc, etched, and a printing plate thus secured. The cost of process work is scarcely a tenth of that of wood engraving, and the results are fully as satisfactory as with any but the highest class of hand work.

The illustrations being under way, and, if woodcuts or process relief blocks, being at hand, the book manuscript is given to the printer, or rather compositor, to be put into type.

The manuscript is usually "cast off" by the foreman of the printing office to see how much it will make in type. That is, the number of words on a page of the manuscript are counted, and compared with a number which a given type in a page of such-and-such dimensions will admit. The total number of pages is thus easily computed. The type in the books under consideration is almost always widely "lead"; *i. e.*, the lines of type are separated instead of being set "solid." The type and the size of page being determined, the manuscript is given to different compositors in "takes," a few pages at a time, and the type is set.

Books of which any large number are to be printed are always electrotyped, in order to save wear on the type and to free it for other use. The form of type is dusted with plumbago or "black lead," a waxen mould is then pressed upon it, making an exact fac-simile, to the finest hair-line, in reverse; more plumbago is dusted or precipitated in solution upon the mould, and it is then suspended in a bath of muriatic acid in which a sheet of copper is also suspended. The acid, assisted by electricity, decomposes the copper, which is deposited in a thin film on the wax, filling every slightest cranny, and perfectly reproducing the original type page. The film of copper is now backed up with type metal till it is, perhaps, an eighth of an inch thick, and after being trimmed and planed it is ready for printing.

The electrotypes having been perfected, and the book finally completed (the first page is usually set last, with the preface, etc., allowance having been made for these pages in the numbering), the plates are sent in a stout box to the press-room. Before printing, the thin electrotypes must be made type-high. To this end they are fastened to blocks of wood or metal by movable clamps.

Before beginning his printing, the pressman must "make ready." He takes a trial impression on the wrapping, or "blanket," of the cylinder, then one on a sheet of paper, and any places which are printed too heavy he cuts out from the latter with a sharp-pointed knife, and where any are too light he pastes on an additional thickness of paper. A woodcut always requires much "overlying" of this sort. When the trial sheet is properly prepared, he pastes it directly over the impression on the cylinder wrapping, and each sheet that is now printed receives the modified pressure due to the "overlying." The paper is usually printed without wetting,

though this was formerly considered necessary to ensure good work. The ink is a thick, tarry substance, not at all like the fluid used in writing; and the better kinds used in printing fine woodcuts are very expensive, sometimes costing five dollars a pound. It is applied by a soft, smooth roller, or rather a number of rollers, which are made from glue and molasses, and give olfactory evidence of their construction.

If photogravures or lithographs are to be used, they have been printing in other places and on very different machines; and if there is to be a title-page in colors, that is usually printed on a small steam press, such as job printers use, each color requiring a separate form containing only such type as are to be printed in that color.

The entire book having been "worked off" on the press, the sheets are carefully examined to exclude defective ones, and are sent to the bindery. When sheets for the entire work have been folded, they are "gathered" by a deft worker, who secures one of each, with the interpolated plates, etc., in the proper order to make the complete book. A "signature" (a letter or figure printed at the foot of the first page on each sheet) is generally used as a guide for the gatherer, but it is sometimes omitted, and the page numbers used instead. The sheets are now pressed tightly together in a "smashing machine," and are then furrowed three or four times across the back, so that the "bands" may not show in ridges, as they did of old; though these ridges are sometimes imitated by pasting strips of pasteboard across the back under the leather cover. The sheets are now sewed, each one separately, with strong thread, to bands of stout twine that run through the furrows in the back, and the ends of the twine, in good bindings, are passed through the pasteboard covers that form the basis of the side-binding. The book is next trimmed, and the edges gilded, marbled, or reddened, if so desired; then it is "rounded" upon the back by beating with a hammer, and then the edges at the back are pounded out, so as to form a groove into which the side covers may fit. The cloth "backing" is pasted over the bands, and the book is ready for the "case," or cover.

The muslin which covers the majority of books, and which is called "cloth," is pasted upon the board covers and turned down over their edges; and leather is put on in a similar way. The cover is now secured to the book by being pasted to the sheets of ornamental paper which always line a book inside. The title of the book and the ornamentation for the binding are usually designed by

an artist who makes a specialty of the work, and these are made into a brass stamp. The cover is coated with size, a sheet of gold leaf is laid upon it, it is put into an embossing press, and struck with the stamp, after which the superfluous gold leaf is brushed off by machinery. With the finer bindings, however, in leather, the process called "hand-tooling" is practiced, in which the press is discarded, and all the elaborate ornamentation is wrought by small hand tools, heated and pressed upon the gold leaf. The best binding material is still conceded to be morocco, though the days have gone by when ministers of foreign affairs provided in treaties with Morocco for an annual supply of a certain number of skins, and France and Germany are now the principal producers of the goatskins, though the finest ones come, as their trade name indicates, from the Levant. Vellum (usually pigskin dressed white) is also a fashionable material for fine bindings, though it is far from durable in respect to color. "Tree calf," which is calfskin polished and ornamented with foliations resembling the branches of a tree, is another fine and costly binding.—*Henry Hoyt Moore, in Christian Union.*

IN DEFENCE OF PUBLISHERS.

One has very little sympathy with authors who grumble at the publisher's getting his share. He did not make the book; true, but he made it possible. You cannot get on without him. His life is far more laborious than yours. He is mewed up in Paternoster row, or wherever it may be, all the best part of the day, summer or winter. You, if you choose, are on the moors, or the links, or by the riverside, or, at worst, in your own study, while he is in an office, answering letters, and making his life tedious with estimates and accounts. The author may be in Samoa or in Lochaber, while the poor publisher is in London, toiling for the author and his brethren. Of course, he may make more money than the author (though I never heard yet of a publisher who became as rich as a lucky speculator in mineral or nitrates, whatever they may be); but his life is far from being so enviable as that of the scribbler. The successful author need envy nobody in the world; the unsuccessful author has his compensations, while I do not see that the unsuccessful publisher has anything of the kind. The author who gets much less than his share is probably the victim of his own vanity, carelessness, or indifference. In these late days he may employ

an agent, perhaps to his commercial advantage, if he has no sensitiveness about allowing his wares to be treated in a purely commercial spirit, and is not afraid of suffering from *trop de zèle*. These reflections, though truisms, are not paradoxes. As far as I can see, the authors who do suffer are those who should receive £3 10s. 6d. and only get 7s. 4d. Their case, like that of the fag-end of labor generally, is hard because they are employed by the fag-end of capital. Their work is worth very little, and they get even less. The Society of Authors seems to fight their cause in a gallant and meritorious way; but the pity of it is that they are authors at all. Generally they are women, easily "put upon" and rather unreasonable. The author who has wares worth selling has only himself to blame if he is unsuccessful when so many publishers are competing for his merchandise. Like other artists, he is seldom a man of business, though publishers know that he is sometimes quite sufficiently shrewd. The end of the matter is that literature is an art, with all the pleasures and advantages of an art to set off against the poverty and the uncommercial character of the artist. He makes many friends among his readers; he may win his share of fame or notoriety; he is happy in his labor; and I venture to think that, if he chooses, he need not be underpaid. And he can always grumble at the Americans. — *Andrew Lang, in St. James' Gazette.*

HABITS OF READING.

(1.) Make time for reading. For this purpose utilize the now wasted fragments. Have a book in the dining-room, and read while you are waiting for your meal; have a book in your overcoat pocket, and read while you are riding in the horse cars to business. Schliemann did his first studying in Greek, as a boy, standing in line at the post-office, waiting his turn for the letters.

(2.) Learn what not to read. Skip the gossip and the scandal in the daily papers; skip the partisan editorials, which tell you only what you thought before. Waste no time before the intellectual looking-glass, which gives you back a reflection of your own image. Read the newspaper with the pencil in hand, mark what is worth preserving, and cut it out. Doing this will fasten the item in your memory, whether you paste it in a scrap-book afterward or not.

(3.) Extend this pencil habit. Make notes of all that you read. A good place for such notes, in your own books, is on the fly-leaf at the end of the volume. In reading borrowed books make the

notes on a half sheet of note paper, and file it away. Be careful how you vitiate your memory by reading what is not worth remembering, but do not discourage yourself from reading because you cannot remember all that you read. All food does not go into tissue — all reading does not remain in the mind.

(4.) Examine yourself on your reading. If possible, have every day a self-recitation. Write down the most important points in what you have read, or in the thoughts which that reading has suggested to you. Keep a journal, not of your feelings, but of your thinking. Doing this will make you think. No one fully possesses a thought until he has expressed it. Self-expression fastens it to the mind.

(5.) Avoid long courses of reading. Begin undertakings which you can have reasonable hope of finishing, and measure your reading, not by the amount of ground covered, but by the amount of thought stimulated and produced.

(6.) Finally, remember that perseverance is the mother of habit, and the only way to form a habit of reading is to keep on reading until it has become a habit. — *Lyman Abbott.*

TO MAKE A LITERARY HIT.

One receipt for a successful literary hit is as follows: Get a fresh idea. Don't improve on somebody else's. The public shuns a literary imitator. Get a bright thought of your own, entirely original. Then write it out in article or in story. Go over it, and cut it down one-half. Why? Because brevity is not only the soul of wit, but the soul of success as well. Don't use long or obsolete words. Every-day language, skilfully handled, is ample. Don't send people to the encyclopædia or dictionary to get your meaning. Some will do it, but the number is very, very small. Better be on the safe side, and use simple words. The most effective sentences ever written were made of words of not more than two syllables. Try to tell the world something it does not know and wants to know. Do that, and success is yours.

The art of successfully naming an article or book is a bugbear to many an author. That it is an art is unquestionable. In these days, the eye of the literary public must be quickly attracted, and a bright head-line to an article or a fresh title on a book-cover is invaluable. No one can so well give a title, especially to a novel or a story, as can the author. This may seem like a truth scarcely worth repeating to some, but there are hundreds of

authors who do not seem to know it. Almost every week brings me the outline of a story, with a request that I name it. No one can do this successfully. To give the right title to a story it is necessary to get thoroughly imbued with the spirit of it, and this no person can do so successfully as the author, or some specially interested person. An outsider never can — especially from a mere outline of plot.

Too much care cannot be taken by an author upon the title of a manuscript. A large percentage of the reading public are buying books and reading articles, attracted by a striking title. I do not mean that a title must be sensational, far-fetched, and certainly it should not be irrelevant to the manuscript, but a fresh, snappy title that will pique curiosity is a strong point for the modern author to bear in mind and seek after. The danger is in overstepping the bounds. A book or an article cannot live by its title. You may get the public to buy it, but if the material is secondary to the title, the fact is not forgotten, and the effect is felt on the next thing you publish. On the other hand, many a good book has suffered because of a heavy, unattractive title. I recall one of the brightest and most clever stories I ever read, published last year, which was given a title that completely killed it. It was an exceedingly vivacious and lively society novel, an exception in its class. But an unfortunate one-word title was given to it, expressing nothing, and suggesting precisely what people nowadays are not reading — heavy fiction. — *Edward Bok, in Ladies' Home Journal.*

"TWELVE RULES FOR REVIEWERS."

If I were to attempt to draw up Twelve Good Rules for Reviewers, I should begin with —

- I. Form an honest opinion.
- II. Express it honestly.
- III. Don't review a book which you cannot take seriously.
- IV. Don't review a book with which you are out of sympathy. That is to say, put yourself in the author's place, and try to see his work from his point of view, which is sure to be a coigne of vantage.
- V. Stick to the text. Review the book before you, and not the book some other author might have written; *obiter dicta* are as valueless from the critic as from the judge. Don't go off on a tangent. And also don't go round in a circle. Say what you have to say, and stop. Don't go on writing about

and about the subject, and merely weaving garlands of flowers of rhetoric.

VI. Beware of the Sham Sample, as Charles Reade called it. Make sure that the specimen bricks you select for quotation do not give a false impression of the *façade*, and not only of the elevation merely, but of the perspective and ground plan.

VII. In reviewing a biography or a history, criticise the book before you, and don't write a parallel essay, for which the volume you have in hand serves only as a peg.

VIII. In reviewing a work of fiction, don't give away the plot. In the eyes of a novelist this is the unpardonable sin. And, as it discounts the pleasure of the reader also, it is almost equally unkind to him.

IX. Don't try to prove every successful author a plagiarist. It may be that many a successful author has been a plagiarist, but no author ever succeeded because of his plagiarism.

X. Don't break a butterfly on a wheel. If a book is not worth much, it is not worth reviewing.

XI. Don't review a book as an east wind would review an apple tree — as it was once said Douglas Jerrold would do. Of what profit to any one is mere bitterness and vexation of spirit?

XII. Remember that the critic's duty is to the reader mainly, and that it is to guide him not only to what is good, but to what is best. Three parts of what is contemporary must be temporary only. — *Brander Matthews, in Christian Union.*

LITERARY STANDARDS OF TO-DAY.

This age is, above all things, a practical one. Readers — as much as everybody else — ask first of a book, "What can I do with it?" If they do not ask it with their tongues, they ask it in their hearts. Periodical literature, more rigidly than any other, is subjected to this utilitarian shorter catechism: "What is it good for? What can we do with it? How can we use it?" To this key — of course, with various moderations — the magazines of to-day must be set, and the young writers who hope for admission to them must, first of all, begin with a purpose, a reason, an intention beyond the merely personal one of expressing their own feelings. They must have something definite to communicate that people want to know.

Again, they must consider that the reading public is so variously constituted that every magazine takes a field of its own, thus dividing the ground between them. There is no such thing as a universal magazine, and any editor who should

try to please everybody, would please nobody; but his particular constituency he must suit exactly, which necessity involves certain absolute restrictions upon every manuscript that shall be acceptable in his pages.

But the most unfortunate story, from a commercial point of view, is one that aims to be so much of everything that it is not much of anything. The writer may, perhaps, reflect within his own mind—and he often explains these reflections to the editor—that the story is a nice love story, so that it will please the ladies; it is a good bear story, too, which will delight the younger readers; and, finally, it conveys an excellent moral lesson, so that it will commend itself to the most austere theologian. Its multiform virtues are its condemnation. Even a religious paper would like it better if it lacked the moral teaching; for the story as it stands won't go under church news, and the boys won't tolerate preaching in *their* column. Have one thing to say, and say it; one story to tell, and tell it.

This need of a concentrated purpose is as pre-emptory in fiction as in any other class of literature. If you want your hero to be recognized and singled out as a man of power from among the multiplicity of fictitious gentlemen that march daily across an editor's desk, present him like a silhouette, clear-cut, definite, and practically alone. "Atmosphere?" Yes, enough to breathe in, but not more than fifteen pounds to the square inch. Do not surround him with so many friends and relations, such a concourse of supernumeraries that the stage is filled with them, and the hero himself is quite eclipsed.

If it is a group to be presented, keep them well together, so they will all be "in focus"; if an army, very well; let them come as the leaves come when forests are rended. It does n't matter whether you have one character in your story or a regiment; swing them all together. If it is a scene to be depicted, don't dance your human puppets obtrusively across the landscape; if a plot to be unravelled, don't pause to paint the sunset. In a word, whatever your purpose, *stick to it*.

Know before you begin what story you have to tell, what scene you have to show, what lesson to teach, what information to impart; and tell that story *only*, or display that picture, urge that lesson, impart that particular piece of information, and no other. Do not attempt to do more than one thing, and, whatever it is, *do it*; neither allow yourself to be beguiled from your original intention into the tempting by-ways of your theme. Take those another time. This is not only the counsel of

artistic effect, but it is the demand of this breathless age as it makes itself heard in periodical literature.

And equally as a purpose must be definite and concentrated, its expression must be condensed to the utmost brevity. The only good reason why some authors are allowed so much more space than others is not that they have so many things to say, but because of the depth and poignancy of the impression that they make. They take space to complete most thoroughly and effectually the one thing they undertake.

Because of the division of labor which modern living has forced upon all workers who aim to furnish marketable wares, periodical reading must run in given channels, and writers must say one thing at a time; that writer being commercially most fortunate who has only one thing to say, for all the time one story to tell, one message to deliver—a recognized specialty. Because, also, of the speed and edge of to-day's life—when even our criminals are required to settle their long accounts by electricity—writers must conform to the spirit of the time in condensation, brevity, and point. And these, to my mind, are some of the literary standards of to-day.—*Wolstan Dixey, in Ladies' Home Journal.*

LACK OF ORIGINALITY.

Mr. Maurice Thompson, in *America*, a Chicago weekly, says that editors have spoiled the originality of American short-story writers. This, or something like it, is true. At any rate, not one story in a hundred can be found fault with as to its technique, and not one in a thousand really repays reading. The Fitz James-O'Brien vein has no workers now; Frank Stockton is leaning towards conventionalism; we are swamped with dialect stories to the point of nausea, and then the hypnotic and theosophic part is being worked threadbare. Stevenson and Kipling are the only unspoiled story-writers left. Yes, editors are too timid on one side and too officious on the other. Writers imitate one another,—there is no worse model,—and, while they are writing, keep only half an eye on their conception and an eye and a half on the supposed average reader. I suppose we know too much about writing to write readably, and then, again, there are too many of us who have no business to write at all; and they are the ones on whom editors depend for the substance of their magazines.—*Julian Hawthorne, in New York World.*

THE AUTHOR.

WM. H. HILLS, . . . EDITOR AND PUBLISHER.

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is stopped when a subscription expires, unless a renewal order, with remittance, is received. Those who intend to renew their subscriptions will prevent delay in the receipt of their magazines, and at the same time confer a favor upon the publisher, by sending their renewal orders promptly.

It is expected that the "Directory of American Writers, Editors, and Publishers," compiled by the editor of THE WRITER, will be published in January. Writers who may wish to make a change of address must notify the editor at once. Writers who have not already sent the desired information should do so without delay.

Up to the present time it has been the rule to keep the forms of THE AUTHOR open till the fifteenth day of the month, in order that the quotations from other periodicals might be as fresh as possible. Hereafter the magazine will go to press so that it may be delivered to subscribers and to newsdealers throughout the United States on the fifteenth day of each month, and the forms will close on the tenth day of the month. In the January number will be given a title-page and full index of THE AUTHOR for 1890.

The bound volumes of THE WRITER and THE AUTHOR for 1890 will be ready for delivery about January 15. Orders will be received now for complete sets of both magazines to the end of 1891 — four bound volumes of THE WRITER, two bound volumes of THE AUTHOR, and a year's subscription to both magazines, ending with December, 1891 — for *Ten Dollars*. The volumes now ready will be sent at once, prepaid; the volumes for 1890 will be sent as soon as they are received from the bindery. The number of sets available is limited, and those who desire to take advantage of this offer should do so without delay.

"THE WRITER" FOR DECEMBER.

THE WRITER for December contains: "Sermon Reporting," by W. G. Thrall; "Writing for Fame and for Gain," by E. L. Masters; "Plagiarism," by Etta B. Casey; "Too Much

Sentiment in Literary Work," by Thomas Bewsy Holmes; "One Duty of a Writer," by A. C. Waldron; "Mrs. Eliza R. Parker," by M. C. Hungerford; "Curiosities of Literature," by Mary A. Denison; "Hints for Young Writers of Fiction," by Alice L. Anderson; and "Proof-Reading," by F. D. Stickney; with the usual departments of "Queries," "The Scrap Basket," "Book Reviews," "Helpful Hints and Suggestions," "Literary Articles in Periodicals," and "News and Notes." The fifth volume of THE WRITER will begin with the number for January, 1891. Every AUTHOR subscriber should be a WRITER subscriber as well.

"THE AUTHOR" FOR 1891.

With the January number will begin the third volume of THE AUTHOR. The magazine has received sufficient support to warrant its continuance, but not enough to make it what the publisher would like it to be. It is desirable that THE AUTHOR should be enlarged, and its usefulness could be greatly increased if the number of pages in each issue could be doubled. If each subscriber for the magazine would send one new subscription with his own renewal, this could be easily done, and old and new subscribers alike would receive the benefit.

THE AUTHOR next year will be as good as THE AUTHOR for 1889 and 1890, and as much better as the editor can make it. Practically the whole subscription list expires with the present number, although already many renewals have been received. The publisher hopes that subscribers will be prompt in sending in their remittances, in order that he may be better able to complete his plans for the coming year. According to the established rule, all names now on the list will be taken off before January 15 unless a renewal order, accompanied by remittance, is received. Subscribers will, therefore, avoid trouble and delay, besides helping the publisher, by sending in their renewal orders promptly.

OUR UNCLEAN FICTION.

The literature of America, in its beginning, was essentially English, because its writers and its readers were of the English race. Its founders were

Irving and Cooper, and the Transcendentalists of New England. The traditions and methods of the mother country prevailed, even after our American revival of letters had created a National sentiment in literature. It is only within the last few years that any departure from them has been attempted. We have now a number of writers, male and female, of varying degrees of inferiority, who call themselves a school, and whose efforts are devoted to fostering immorality. How are we to account for this phenomenon, for which the history of the literature of our language affords no precedent or parallel, unless it be in the corrupt literature of the Restoration? Does it not occur to us first of all to seek for a like cause—a foreign influence? In my judgment, this is the true explanation—a foreign influence coming through two channels. It seems indisputable, that a principal cause must be found in the fact that in the centres of thought and population in this country the Anglo-Saxon modes of thought and belief have been for the time superseded by a sort of cosmopolitan sentiment, with a large Gallic constituent. The tremendous influx of foreigners of other races than our own has created a hybrid population, and unsettled conviction on almost every subject. But, it will be said, the argument is defective, because a large portion of our immigrant population is Teutonic. It must be borne in mind that the allegation of moral superiority applies especially to the Anglo-Saxon people and literature. It is by the Anglo-Saxons, I submit, that the old German institutions and characteristics have been best preserved and developed. It is also true that the Teutonic as well as other immigrants are drawn from the lower classes of population, and are not, therefore, thoroughly representative. It may be admitted that the objection to the argument is in a measure valid. But who will stultify himself by denying to our foreign population a tremendous influence in literature, as in everything else? This is one source of foreign influence. The other is described in the one word—Paris. A prominent man of letters said to me, recently, that in his judgment the French were almost entirely responsible for our immoral fiction. There are ten thousand Americans resident in Paris. Thousands more annually visit that alluring capital. Paris sets the fashion. These Americans readily yield to its fascinations, and become converts to its ways of acting and thinking. Pilgrims returning home bring with them the Parisian ideas. If they are only ladies and gentlemen, it is probable that this will appear most strikingly in a certain un-American and Gallic freedom in the range of conversation. If they are

artists, a decided preference for unflinching nudity in art will be perceptible. If they are writers, they will laud the liberality of French sentiment, and long for the freedom of Balzac and Zola. I have heard it asserted that it is possible to trace directly to Paris the responsibility for all our erotic writers, who with accurate knowledge of our National conditions have begun at a propitious time the imitation of French romance. The condition cannot continue. Our capacity of assimilation is only temporarily exceeded by the tremendous increase of foreign population. Moreover, we shall relieve the situation by judicious legislation, if necessary, and that in the near future. The Anglo-Saxon character and sentiment will again prove themselves stronger than the French and all others. At the heart we are still sound. American institutions, a higher education, and the general advance of civilization will triumph over these temporary evils; and the pitiful pessimist and eroticist will lose their audience and find their occupation gone.—*Joshua W. Caldwell, in December New England Magazine.*

QUERIES.

No. 66. — What is the origin of the phrase: "He dipped his pen into his heart and wrote"? H. W. CAMBRIDGE, MASS.

No. 67. — Is Coventry Patmore still living? Can any reader of THE AUTHOR give me any information about him? L. P. C. LOWELL, MASS.

PERSONAL GOSSIP ABOUT WRITERS.

Grant. — To be born in Boston, graduated at Harvard, own a pew in Trinity (Phillips Brooks') Church, a villa on the north shore or in Newport, and be buried in Mount Auburn,—this is considered by the modern Athenian to be the ideal career of man. Fortunately for the society he adorns and the public to whose entertainment and enlightenment he contributes, Mr. Robert Grant has not yet met the last condition of this Bostonian outline, but he has fulfilled nearly all the others. His life has been one singularly rich in opportunities, and he has known well how to extract from these the finest conditions and transmute privilege into high service. Robert Grant was born in Boston in 1832, completed the Boston Latin School course with great success, graduated from Harvard in 1873, and three years later took the degree of Ph. D. He entered the Harvard Law School, from which he

graduated in 1879, and immediately commenced the practice of law in Boston. Between the time of Mr. Grant's admission to the bar and 1885-86, a period of some seven years, he achieved a class of literary work unique in its range, delicate and subtle in fancy, full of charm and imaginative grace. This work included seven novels, and a number of very clever poems; but each was so individual in its own line and owed so little to precedent that his work cannot be altogether classified by any broadly accepted definitions. "The Little Tin Gods on Wheels," a satire in verse, appeared in 1879. After this appeared "The Confessions of a Frivolous Girl," which went through a number of editions, and was a literary as well as a popular success.

Another excellent portrait of the girl in social high life is Dorothy in "The Average Man," a story that Mr. Grant contributed as a serial to the *Century Magazine* in 1883. "Face to Face" is another of Mr. Grant's very charming novels of social life. "The King's Men," was a story written by Mr. Grant in collaboration with three of his friends, leading Boston authors—Boyle O'Reilly, "J. S. of Dale" (Mr. Stimpson), and Mr. John Wheelwright. "The Lamps" was the title of a clever satire in verse. "The Knave of Hearts," by "A Romantic Young Lady," appeared in 1885-86. On the 250th anniversary of the Boston Latin School—the oldest school in America—Rev. Dr. Phillips Brooks delivered the oration, and Robert Grant wrote and recited the poem for the occasion. Mr. Grant was also invited a few years ago to write the Phi Beta Kappa poem, and it was for this occasion that he wrote his famous "Yankee Doodle," a very keen and ingenious hit at certain political abuses and corruptions of that year in Massachusetts. In the past two or three years Mr. Grant has written in a new vein, that of out-of-door life. "Josh Hall; or, The School Days of an American Boy," made a furor among the boys. Mr. Grant married the daughter of an English nobleman in Canada, and their home is on Commonwealth avenue, the palatial boulevard of Boston. With a large and exacting legal business, and also serving at present as one of the water commissioners of Boston, Mr. Grant finds little time for literary work; still he manages to write an hour at least each day with considerable regularity. He has the happy elasticity of temperament that enables him to do his work wherever he happens to be, either at his home or his office.—*Lilian Whiting, in Fall River Globe.*

Howells. — William Dean Howells was a guest at the Iroquois yesterday. He has been accompanying his sister, Miss Howells, on a visit to his par-

ents in Ohio. Mr. Howells left for Boston at 6 o'clock last evening. To a reporter, who asked him what new books he was going to publish, Mr. Howells said:—

"Well, I shall write a story for the *New York Sun*, that will begin sometime next fall and run through the year. I suppose it will be printed in the Sunday edition. Then, during the year, I shall write a story for *Harper's Magazine*, that will appear sometime in 1892."

"Does your department work on *Harper's Magazine*—'The Study'—occupy very much of your time?" asked the reporter.

"I usually give about one week out of each month to it. That includes writing, revision, and everything connected with the department."

"Has your last book—'A Boy's Town'—met with the degree of favor you contemplated?"

"I think it has; but, of course, you understand that it was somewhat of a departure from my previous line of work. In reality it is but a series of reminiscences of the old town of my boyhood. In this book I tell the story of how the world looked to me when I was a boy in the little old town of Hamilton, Ohio. I aimed to make it a true story of the average boy's life, at that period when his own town is about all the world he knows, and when all things prospective or speculative in his mind are measured by his present surroundings."

"Then in this story you have, of course, made yourself anonymously the central figure, and were you not in a degree putting yourself in the way of criticism, as Lord Byron did in impersonating himself in 'Childe Harold,' 'The Corsair,' and 'Don Juan'?"

"No, I think not. You see a writer's relations with the world are quite different now from what they were in the old days of romance. To-day we are interested in ourselves because we are a part of the race. In Byron's time a writer might be said to have been interested in the race because it was a part of himself. I often wonder that any person, when he stops to consider his real insignificance in this great universe, can assume airs of importance. No man, to me, is of any consequence except as being a part of the universe and amenable to the great moral law."

"Mr. Howells, what is your method of work? Are all your plots outlined before you begin writing?"

"As the saying goes, I usually know how the story is coming out, but, of course, the detail of the plot is developed as I write, and often, too, the incidents of daily surroundings are woven into the story."

"In reference to your last book, don't you think that in that line—in the way of drawing accurate pen pictures of American farm life—there is a great field for some genius?"

"My dear sir, you have touched upon a point of the greatest interest to me. Yes, there is a field, and it is one of the best in American literature to-day. There is a class of middle-aged readers in the cities and country to-day that want to look back at the old farm life as it was a generation ago. These pictures must be painted from life and not from fancy. Write of the old farm as you remember it, not as you fancy it might have been. You say this is a field for some genius. Let me correct you there. It is the field for some one like you or me who could put their whole life into it, and work, work, work! That is genius—work. I believe the literary man loves his work better than any other man loves his, and I know that his success depends as much upon his perseverance as does success in any other vocation."—*Buffalo Times*.

Seawell.—Residents of Washington often see the slight girlish form of a beautiful woman who has recently won renown in fiction. It is Miss Molly Elliott Seawell, author of "Throckmorton" and other works, and winner of the story prize of the *Youth's Companion*. Miss Seawell lives in a big roomy house in O street, and when not engaged in fiction devotes her time to writing editorials for the *New York Sun*. She has done considerable correspondence for the great newspapers, and is the "Sydney" of the *Boston Transcript*. When she first began literary work, she wrote an editorial and sent it at haphazard to Mr. Dana, of the *Sun*, without giving her right name. Mr. Dana at once saw in it the evidences of strength and virility, and, always on the alert for new talent for his paper, wrote to the author to come to him in New York. He was much surprised when a shy, timid, little woman, weighing not over 100 pounds, made her appearance in his sanctum and declared herself to be the author of the article. She was at once engaged to do for the *Sun* such work as she pleased, and some of the strongest articles that have appeared on the *Sun's* editorial page have been from her pen. She prefers fiction, however, and the success of "Throckmorton" and "Hale-Weston" have given her new encouragement and added a very snug sum to her bank account.—*Edward Bok, in Boston Journal*.

Shillaber.—The death of Mr. Shillaber took place at his residence in Chelsea last evening. For many years a victim of rheumatism, he died of heart failure, having within a week been prostrated

by this disease. A sketch of the incidents of Mr. Shillaber's life would be of interest, but a letter received about a year since contained a singular request, which we respect. He desired to write the outline of his own life, making the request that it should be published after his death. It is given below from his own manuscript:—

BENJAMIN PENHALLOW SHILLABER.

Born in Portsmouth, N. H., July 12, 1814, with an exceedingly limited education at the old Cabot-street schoolhouse, under Masters Weeks and Barry, was called, October, 1830, to the printing office of the *New Hampshire Palladium* and *Straford Advertiser*, at Dover, N. H., continuing upwards of two years, during a momentous struggle between Isaac Hill and Levi Woodbury, the paper, in Woodbury's interest, dying from excess of energy. In 1833 came to Boston, finished my trade, then comprehending all branches of the profession, and labored as a jour. printer until, in 1836, I, compelled by failing health, went to Demarara, British Guiana, where, for nearly two years, I served on the *Royal Gazette*, the government official paper, a subject of William IV. and Victoria. Returned to Boston in 1838, married August 15 of that year, still continuing in printer craft, and in 1840 became connected with the *Boston Post*, edited by Colonel Charles G. Greene. In 1850 left to edit the *Pathfinder* and *Carpet Bag*, the latter a humorous sheet, started by Messrs. Snow & Wilder. Continued in this position until 1853. While on the *Post*, in 1847, commenced the Partingtonian papers, which became very popular; likewise commenced the rhymed efforts which gave an unlooked-for fame to the author. In 1853—the *Carpet Bag*, a financial failure, though deserving a better fate—returned to the *Post* as reporter, remaining until 1856, when the *Saturday Evening Gazette*, Colonel William W. Clapp, proprietor and editor, became the field of future operations. From his connection with the *Gazette*, through the kindness of his principal, Mr. Clapp, proceeded all the distinction that has attached to his name. He became a lecturer, and, though not a brilliant success, was far from being a failure. Mrs. Partington, his alter ego, opened to him a warm reception everywhere. He was called to Tufts and Dartmouth Colleges for rhymed efforts, and won at the latter honorary membership in the P. B. K. Society. His connection with the Freemasons, Odd Fellows, and the Boston Typographical Society led to frequent drafts upon his purse for their banquets, which he never denied, and many other occasions, where his "fatal facility" for verse-writing was known. He

asked for no pecuniary return, feeling that his gift, if so it might be called, was for general distribution, his wish being to make others happy. Succeeding he hoped. Removing to Chelsea in 1855, he was placed upon the school board,—two years its secretary,—on which remained for nine years, voluntarily retiring. He took no part in public affairs,—though often solicited to do so,—save using his pen on occasions, but felt a deep interest in matters of general interest, and in the War of the Rebellion identified himself, editorially and personally, with his country's cause, being one of the Chelsea committee of one hundred, and contributed his means and time to the work of that body. As a veteran Odd Fellow, dating from 1843, he was instrumental in establishing the Veteran Association, now grown numerous, and in 1853 gave the keynote to the return of the sons of Portsmouth, of which two events he was especially proud. It may be said of him, as of Dogberry, that "he was a fellow that had losses," and, with a dear wife and children, life at times bore heavily upon him, but he never railed at fortune nor surrendered one whit to despair. Friends were true to him, and their aid would have stayed him, but he had a good degree of self-reliance, and until years and failing health supervened, their help was not needed. The death of his wife in 1883—"a sweeter woman ne'er drew breath"—was the saddest and most crushing event of his life, and he mourned her with constant devotion to the last of his days. He leaves four children,—of eight,—a son in New York, a widowed daughter, and one married, and one single, his faithful housekeeper. He has six grandchildren, one, William Shillaber, Jr., a graduate of Columbia College, '89, and Alice Clement, of Wellesley, '91. He has published nine books, three original stories for boys, two of poems, largely compilations from his works outside of his editorial labors. His highest incentive ever has been to please and cheer his readers. He has been a Democrat in politics and a liberal in religious belief (vice-president of the Liberal Union Club), affiliating with the Universalists, but believing that character more than creed was the standard of human excellence. Wishing he had been much better, but thankful he was no worse, he ends his immaterial story.—*Boston Journal*, November 26.

Whittier.—The rain, which blew in more and more from the sea as the day wore on, did not deter a goodly number of people from visiting John G. Whittier at Oak Knoll on his eighty-third birthday, December 17. Mr. Whittier appeared in excellent health on the day which ushered in his eighty-fourth

year. He was much upon his feet, but his slender form was erect, his keen eye as bright as ever, his voice strong and cheery, and his hand-grasp might have been that of a man in the prime of life. Mr. Whittier has always been a man of delicate health, and to-day he is an old man. But he is as vigorous as his age and constitution would warrant, and his only infirmities are those which would be expected in a man of his years. It is needless to say that the poet's mental vigor remains unimpaired. He still does considerable literary work, and his correspondence is no small item of his daily labors. Among other things which have occupied Mr. Whittier's attention in the past year is the preparation of a small collection of his later poems, some of which have never been published. The dainty volume is entitled "At Sundown," and the autograph of the poet appears upon the fly-leaf. The work has been privately printed for limited circulation among the poet's friends. Mr. Whittier passed his eighty-third birthday very quietly, on the whole. He rose at his accustomed hour, and dined early. Mrs. J. T. Fields was his guest at dinner, and family relatives were also present. Mr. Whittier was assisted in receiving the guests who came during the afternoon and evening by his cousins, with whom he lives at Oak Knoll, — Mrs. Woodman and the Misses Johnson, — who as usual proved themselves charming hostesses. The number of callers was limited for the most part to the more intimate of the poet's friends. Mr. Whittier will probably remain at Oak Knoll during the winter. — *Boston Advertiser*.

LITERARY NEWS AND NOTES.

Miss Vida D. Scudder, who contributes a short prose poem, entitled "A Modern Legend," to *Harper's Magazine* for January, is a niece of H. Bruce Scudder, and was born in Southern India, where her parents were residing as missionaries. She is now a teacher at Wellesley College, and is said to be an enthusiastic advocate of whatever pertains to the advancement of woman.

Mrs. Mary J. Holmes, the author, recently paid a visit to her niece, Mrs. F. H. Claflin, of Boston. Mrs. Holmes was accompanied by her husband, Daniel Holmes, and Miss Florence Hawes, daughter of Judge Hawes, of Chicago. Mrs. Holmes is taking a short rest from her literary work, and after a visit to her sister and nephew at Worcester, she will return to her home at Rockport, N. Y., and complete her work upon "Margueret," her forthcoming book.

The *Harvard Daily Crimson* for December 11 says: "Mr. J. D. Barry, '89, has been chosen editor of the *Cosmopolitan Magazine*."

The latest reports of the health of Alphonse Daudet are of a discouraging nature. Private letters speak of him as hopelessly ill of a spinal disease at his summer home on the banks of the Seine.

Rudyard Kipling when writing speaks every word aloud, that he may better judge of its fitness.

Senator Ingalls, it is said, has been offered \$15,000 a year to edit *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*.

Exceedingly useful is the calendar of the Pope Manufacturing Company, of Boston, for 1891. It is in the form of a pad containing 366 leaves, each $5\frac{1}{2} \times 2\frac{1}{2}$ inches, each leaf containing blank for memoranda, and as the leaves are only fastened at the upper end, any leaf can be exposed, no stub being left when the leaves are torn off. The pad rests upon a stand, containing penrack and pencil-holder, and made of stained wood.

Mary E. Wilkins is now at work on a novel, entitled "A New England Nun."

A copyright bill differing only by the addition of a reciprocity clause from the bill which the Senate passed May 10, 1888, by a vote of 34 to 10, has passed the House of Representatives. That it may be speedily reached and passed by the Senate is earnestly desired.

Mr. DeBlowitz, the famous correspondent of the *London Times*, will contribute another chapter of his memoirs to *Harper's Magazine* for January.

James Whitcomb Riley, when some one recently asked him to do a piece of work, replied: "I can't! In the writing line, I was never so involved before. Even the hope of waking to find myself famous is denied me, since I have n't time in which to fall asleep."

Mrs. Alice Wellington Rollins is a thoroughly charming woman, small and slight, with a winsome face, lit with dark, bright eyes, and irradiated with a bewitching smile. Within the last two years Mrs. Rollins has seen much of strange countries. When the last yellow fever epidemic fell upon Brazil she was there and stayed through it. After several months she went on to Bermuda, whence she journeyed to Alaska. One of these days she will tell us more about her travels — in a volume to be called "From Palm to Glacier."

Brander Matthews has finished his first juvenile story, "Tom Paulding," which *St. Nicholas* has purchased.

Fannie Aymar Mathews has ended her three-years' engagement with the *Pittsburg Bulletin*, but will continue to write for the paper a monthly article, under the general heading "Through My Lorgnette." Her suit now pending in the New York Superior Court regarding her play, "Washington Life," against Messrs. Frohman, Belasco, and De Mille, is the first of its kind on record. She is now engaged on an illustrated article on "American Women Dramatists." A. M. Palmer is under contract to bring out her "curtain-raiser," called "The Comedienne."

Harper's Magazine is to make a specialty next year of a collection of unpublished original drawings by Thackeray.

The next work of Robert Louis Stevenson will be called "The South Seas; a Record of Three Cruisers," and will deal with the language, manners, morals, and customs of the dusky peoples whom the author has visited, and among whom he has elected to live.

Miss Constance Fenimore Woolston, who is settled for the winter at Cheltenham, Eng., is writing a novel.

Mrs. Elizabeth Stuart Phelps Ward will be glad to receive, for temporary use in the writing of a memorial of her father, Professor Austin Phelps, any letters, or portions of letters, written by him to his friends which they may feel willing to intrust to her care and judgment, and which may be found suitable for biographic publication. All such letters will be returned to their owners in due time. They may be addressed to Mrs. E. S. P. Ward, care of the *Congregationalist*, Boston.

Walt Whitman has written a paper for the *North American Review* discussing the question, "Have we a National Literature?"

Little Lionel Burnett, who died of consumption recently, was not the original of "Little Lord Fauntleroy," though he has generally been supposed to be. That honor fell to the younger son, Vivian, who is in Washington with his father, Dr. S. H. Burnett.

It is promised that the late M. Chatrian's "Literary Diary" will soon be published. M. Chatrian was an extensive reader and an acute critic. This diary is described as consisting of extracts from his reading, extending over many years, with comments on authors' styles and the character of their genius.

General Lew Wallace is writing with elaborate care a story of the conquest of Constantinople by the Turk, in 1454. He intends it to be as good in its way as "Ben Hur."

Houghton, Mifflin, & Co. have republished Lowell's "Fable for the Critics," illustrated with a lot of pen-and-ink portraits of the literary lights that were snuffed or extinguished by this wonderful series of jokes from "The Tub of Diogenes."

Eugene Field, who has just reached New York on his way from Europe to Chicago, has five stories under way.

Mrs. Annie Jenness Miller has just signed a contract with a New York publishing house for her first novel.

Ignatius Donnelly is the author of "Cæsar's Column: A Story of the Twentieth Century," published several months ago under the signature of "Edmund Boisgilbert, M. D."

Speaking of Joaquin Miller's bad manuscript, the *Chicago Inter-Ocean* says: "The compositors and proof-readers on the *Inter-Ocean* have a struggle with Mr. Miller's manuscript every week. The manuscript of the sketch, 'Twin Babies,' which appeared Sunday, was a holy terror."

There is talk of naming a new park in New Haven after Donald G. Mitchell. Since his recent accident, by the way, Mr. Mitchell has to do all his writing with his left hand.

The new novel on which Thomas A. Edison and George Parsons Lathrop have been working conjointly will probably be ready for the press in January. Mr. Edison has taken the keenest interest in the work, and in drawing on his imagination has hit upon a number of clever electrical devices, which he has considered it worth while to patent. The book will contain a number of sketches made by the inventor to illustrate his predictions.

Sarah Orne Jewett, Miss Mary Agnes Tincker, Miss Wells, Miss Fletcher, the novelist, Blanche Willis Howard (now the wife of a German professor), Miss Rebecca Clark, "Fanny Fern," Harriet Prescott Spofford, Florence Percy, and Mrs. Allen are all gifted daughters of Maine.

Bayard Taylor's old home, Cedarcroft, will be offered for sale again in January, owing to the death of its owner, Dr. Levis.

The Holts will publish in January the first number of a new monthly, *The Educational Review*. Probably no equally promising attempt at an educational period has ever before been made.

